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keeping the slides carefully shut tight, tries how many honest men he *cannot* find. Thus far he seems to have been very successful. Well was the Count named Adam, for he is the only man of his generation.

But neither Count Gurowski's overweening conceit of himself, nor his savage criticisms, should lead us to overlook the fact that he is a man of great culture, intelligence, and, above all, independence. His experience of human affairs, too, has been wellnigh as various and intimate as that of Ulysses himself. His appreciation of the deep significance of our civil war and of the heroism of the people is keen and sympathetic, and though we think the war itself has sobered and strengthened us by making us feel the duties and realities of life as never before, yet we may still find a healthy tonic in criticisms which, if bitter, are also honest and uncompromising.

17. — *Diplomatic Correspondence*, 1863. Parts I. and II., pp. li. and 1389, with Supplement to Part I., pp. cxxxix. Washington. 1864.

It has long been the fashion to say sharp things about the devious verbosity of diplomatists and the cunning tricks of lawyers, but the world is not yet in such near prospect of the Millennium as to get along without either. One of the most venerable of modern puns is Sir Henry Wotton's slur upon an ambassador as "an honest man sent to *lie* abroad for the good of his country." So pleased with it was the good knight himself, as to try to give it European currency by translating it into Latin. But he only spoiled the point, and the learned Scioppius, one of the most stupendous *issimi* of his day, held up the *ad mentiendum* as a fair sample of Protestant principle and English honesty. Sully also, in speaking of the treaty of Vervins, has his sneer at the protocols and what-nots of the plenipotentiaries. "I shall take no notice of the rest of those formalities in use amongst them, and leave it to others to extol those refined stratagems that in politics are thought the masterpieces of human wit." And yet we doubt not that the Duke himself, when he was sent, a year or two later, on an embassy to England, found it convenient to wrap his little gems of meaning in wordy cotton-wool, like others of his trade.

The truth is, that both lawyers and diplomatists are the *buffers* of society, preventing the too violent collision of men and nations. Without them the world would soon fall back to the primitive system of *faustrecht*, and we should have private or public war on our hands all the time. Ambassadors have also, as purveyors of the material of history, earned a right to the gratitude of mankind, scarcely second to that of

writers of memoirs. How much do we not owe to the archives of Venice, France, and Spain? How much more vivid and contemporary is our conception of the historical personages of past times, when we read how his Majesty looked, or what some great man "said to me this morning"? It is mere gossip, to be sure; but then all history is nothing more than gossip, with the world for a tea-table. We wish it were the fashion still for ambassadors to sketch and send home these bits of the historical picturesque, to report from the green-room as well as the boxes of the great theatre to which they have a free admission. The volumes before us are singularly barren in this respect, and we owe all the more thanks to Mr. Thayer, our Consul-General in Egypt, for a very lively account of the Sultan's visit to Alexandria.

We are undoubtedly at a disadvantage, as respects the other great nations, in not having a regular diplomatic service, in which our ministers might be trained to their profession, and in which promotion should be the reward of merit. Yet we have no reason to be ashamed of the manner in which we are at present represented abroad. Our embassies at London, Paris, Vienna, and Turin are filled by really eminent men, and among our consuls there are some, like Mr. Bigelow at Paris, in all respects competent to the higher grade. It is true that our most important diplomatic posts, of great importance even in quiet times for the impressions they give of our national character, have been too often shamelessly peculated in to pay the wages of dirty political work at home, and the ears of an American are made to tingle in many a European capital with traditions of the drunken or debauched Excellencies who have misrepresented his country; yet our diplomacy, even within recent memory, has been illustrated by such names as Irving, Bancroft, and Everett. Our civil war has taught us, among other useful things, how intimate and sensitive are our relations with the Old World, and we trust that it will before long become impossible for an American President to make the awkward blunder of nominating a German to Italy or a political exile to Germany. There should be a Board of Examiners for consular candidates, which, if it did not always succeed in sifting out competent men, might at least make it less likely that our national representative in any foreign town should be exceptionally vulgar and ignorant.

In the present collection, the correspondence which will be read with most interest is that which concerns our relations with England, and it is no small satisfaction that our interests should have been committed, during so critical a period, to a man so prudent, able, and tenacious as Mr. Adams. The third of his name in hereditary succession who has been our ambassador at St. James's, he has so acquitted himself as to

more than justify expectation. A truly solid man, with a sense of the true points at issue not to be baffled or diverted, he has managed the dangerous business of the Alabama and the Rebel rams with a discreet firmness that is already having its effect on public opinion in England. It is truly diverting to see Earl Russell endeavoring to talk down to a man like this, to watch his superciliousness gradually become vexation, doubt, alarm, and finally apologetic concession. Mr. Adams, continually "having the honor to be," and "taking this occasion to renew," with the blandest formality forces his Lordship closer and closer to the wall, where he leaves him pinned at last, "with distinguished consideration," of course, but squirming in most entomological fashion. The praise once bestowed on Sir Francis Walsingham is admirably applicable to our ambassador. It may truly be said of him, "How vigilant he was to gather true intelligence; what means and persons he employed for it; how punctual he was in keeping to his instructions where he was limited, and how wary and judicious where he was left free; still advancing, upon all occasions, the reputation and interest of his Great Mistress, with a lively and indefatigable devotion!"

There seems to be a growing tendency of late to undervalue Mr. Seward. That he should be spoken slightly of in England is not to be wondered at, but that such sneers should be caught up and repeated in this country argues a pitiful provincialism not very flattering to our independence. There is, to be sure, a little inconsistency in the charges brought against him. On that side of the water he is accused of bluster, and on this, of truckling. A man must have pretty fairly preserved, one would say, the becoming moderation of statesmanship, who is attacked on such opposite grounds. If Mr. Seward sometimes seem to foreign critics a little too confident, we at least need like him none the less for having faith in the destiny of his country. If his despatches now and then smack a little of the schoolmaster, we must not forget that European statesmen are boys in their *a-b abs* in all that concerns a knowledge of us and our affairs. In the Trent case we undoubtedly had no standing whatever in international law, and because England made her demand a little gruffly, was Mr. Seward to insure our dismemberment as a nation by a foreign war on a point of childish temper? The true office of a statesman is to prevent his countrymen from acting under the influence of passion. Mr. Seward, by universal admission, was one of the ablest, if not the ablest, of our politicians three years ago, and we cannot believe that he has become so suddenly imbecile. He was an antislavery man when it was not yet prosperous to be so, before some of his critics were born, and if he now set a higher value on the merely territorial integrity of the country than seems wise

to some, it is only the natural result of a position which compels him to see and feel more keenly than anything else the weakness and danger which have resulted from disunion in our relations with foreign powers. If we have been able for three years to thwart all designs at intervention, with the war and ruin that would have followed, we owe it mainly to Mr. Seward; and if his victories have been less noisy, and less gratifying to our pride, than those in other fields, they have been no less effective, nor less deserving the gratitude of his country.

18. — *Autobiography, Correspondence, &c. of LYMAN BEECHER, D. D.* Edited by CHARLES BEECHER. With Illustrations. In Two Volumes. Vol. I. New York: Harpers. 12mo. pp. viii. 563.

"As for me, I am an ancestor," said Napoleon quietly to somebody who was descanting somewhat mercilessly, as is the wont of genealogists, on the merits of his pedigree. Dr. Beecher might have indulged in the same sarcasm, for he was the progenitor of a remarkable race. Few men who went about, as Longfellow says, with iron pots on their heads, had more manhood in their loins than he, and two such children as Mrs. Stowe and Henry Ward Beecher are seldom born to one father. He was himself a man of real pith and vigor, a large nature stretching cramped tenets till they sat easily on him.

The book is made up of Dr. Beecher's own conversational autobiography, his correspondence, and the recollections and letters of his children. The materials are rather dumped down than artistically arranged, and the editor fully justifies the auguries of his childhood in the clumsiness with which he has done his work. He gives us a great deal of matter not only irrelevant, but positively disagreeable, which argues very dull perceptions as to what is of interest to the world. He seems to think that he is writing the life of the family, and insists on telling us all their little ailments, as if readers had no rights which a biographer is bound to respect. Biography, no doubt, is only household history, but there are occasions on which even this familiar Muse should have breeding enough to look the other way. There are a great many things which we ought to thank Ahriman for sweeping out into his dust-heap.

But, despite all faults of execution, the volume is very interesting. Mrs. Stowe's contributions are the very poetry of country memories, and many of her sketches, that of the church at Litchfield with its choir, for instance, give us precisely what we want to know, and what is so carefully forgotten in our local histories. We have very pleasant